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Prayer for Global Ministries trip to the Congo



Rev. Elizabeth Mitchell Clement from First Congregational Church Atlanta is traveling to the Congo this month with a film crew and partners from Global Ministries. She has requested prayer for their journey, which is bringing leaders from partner churches in Haiti together with leaders in the Congo as part of the “South to South” initiative.

Rev. Clement writes,

“

As you may know, the recent history of both the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC/Kinshasa) and the Republic of Congo (RC/Brazzaville) has been very difficult, violent and sad. And yet, our Christian missions that were established there more than 100 years ago continue their redeeming, reconciling work through every struggle. North Americans have much to learn from their steadfast faith, and we will seek ways to partner with them going forward.

The trip plans not only to bring together two partners from these two distinct geographical regions that share much of the same cultural history and struggle but also seeks to create a space for sharing the life and witness of our global partners with other churches and other

constituents in the United States. Through media, church visits and story telling, the delegation plans to spread this message of faith and cross cultural connection.

The Southeast Conference in particular has connections with the Democratic Republic of the Congo reaching back to 1973 when Millard Fuller, an SEC UCC member from Alabama, moved to what was then Zaire to serve as a missionary with our sister denomination, the Disciples of Christ. There Millard and his family pioneered the affordable, decent housing program that would eventually become Habitat for Humanity and that lives on as the Fuller Center for Housing, headquartered in Americus, GA. In 2011 members of the Southeast Conference joined with the Fuller Center to revisit where the Fullers lived and worked, to meet with the Disciples of Christ Community of Congo, and to retell the story of our Conference's connections to the ongoing housing ministries in the Congo.



Please join us in praying for Rev. Clement and the rest of the Global Ministries delegation in their travels October 1st through October 16th.

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Special jazz homecoming weekend at First Church in Atlanta

First Congregational UCC in Atlanta would like to invite everyone to participate in their jazz filled homecoming weekend double header. On Friday evening, October 4th, the “First Friday at First” features the music of Kathleen Bertrand and Friends along with food and fellowship from 6pm-9pm. Tickets are only \$10. Paid parking is available.

The following Sunday, features guest artist and preacher Kirk Whalum for the 146th annual homecoming of the church. The service starts at 11am.



A promotional poster for a jazz homecoming weekend. On the left, a portrait of Kirk Whalum, a man with glasses, a brown hat, and a yellow scarf, holding a saxophone. On the right, text reads: "Don't miss this divine double header!", "HOMECOMING & WORSHIP SERVICE with Preacher and Guest Artist KIRK WHALUM", "Sunday, October 6th, 11:00AM", "First Congregational Church, UCC 105 Courtland Street, NE Atlanta, GA 30303", "ALL ARE WELCOME!", and the First Church logo.

Don't miss this divine double header!

HOMECOMING & WORSHIP SERVICE
with
Preacher and Guest Artist
KIRK WHALUM
Sunday, October 6th, 11:00AM

First Congregational Church, UCC
105 Courtland Street, NE
Atlanta, GA 30303

ALL ARE WELCOME!



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Caring for Veterans “Grand Rounds” Event in Atlanta



In order to address the needs of veterans in our community this year's Spiritual Care Grand Rounds at the Atlanta VA Medical Center will focus on "Healing the Soul after War: How Chaplains and Other Helping Professionals May Be Effective with Today's Veterans and their Family Members." In concert with the celebration of Spiritual Care Week, chaplains and other spiritual care professionals are encouraged to participate.

Please save the date and pass the word to all about this tremendous offering to aid us in

welcoming and caring for our Veterans and their family members in our respective communities.
You can download flyers here:

[Download](#)

Save the Date for Rounds

[Download](#)

"Healing the Soul After War" Flyer

**"Healing the Soul after War:
How Chaplains and Other Helping Professionals
May Be Effective with Today's Veterans
and their Family Members"**

**Presented by: Rev. Peter E. Bauer
LTC, MS, USAR (Ret.) LCSW, LMFT, LCDC, ACSW, BCD**

When: Wednesday, October 23, 2013

Time: 7:30am-12:30pm

Where: Atlanta VA Medical Center

Pete Wheeler Auditorium

1670 Clairmont Rd

Decatur, GA 30033

Schedule of Events

- 7:30 am-8:00 am: Registration
- 8:00am -10:00am: Healing The Soul After War
- 10:00am-10:30am: Break
- 10:30am-12:30am: Moral Injury: How Chaplains and Other Helping Professionals Are Effective



Rev. Peter E. Bauer is a United Church of Christ minister, ordained for over 34 years.

He is a member of the South Central Conference, The United Church of Christ. Peter is also a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and Licensed Marriage And Family Therapist (LMFT), Board Approved Supervisor for both LCSW, LMFT, and he is a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC). Peter works for the Department

of Veterans Affairs, Frank Tejada Outpatient Clinic, serving in the OIF/OEF/OND Program.

He also teaches as an Adjunct Professor in the Department Of Social Work at University of Texas, San Antonio, TX. Peter’s interests include Spirituality and Mental Health. He has had extensive experience working with Active Duty service members, Veterans and their families, as well as with a wide range of spiritually-based organizations.

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Conference Snapshots – ICM Reflections



Rev. Gary Luther Myers delivering the Association Meeting keynote address

The Alabama/Tennessee /Mississippi Association held a meeting at Church of the Savior in Knoxville on September 13-14. The agenda proposed a vote on a resolution to dissolve the Association. But before the resolution came to the floor of the meeting for a vote, God's Spirit seemed to prevail – Robert's Rules of Order were suspended to allow general discussion. It was clear that a majority of those present saw the need for change, but the delegates did not feel ready to dissolve the Association. Over and over delegates affirmed their history of congregations and individuals

being connected, and affirmed the value of the resulting relationships. What followed was a creative solution: a task force was named to work on imagining a new future. That task force will then present a different resolution for a vote at the next Association meeting. My guess is that it will be a different kind of structure that doesn't rely on elected officers and formal meetings ... but instead it will offer a new way of gathering UCC folk in regional settings for fellowship, education, and fun!

I came away from that meeting encouraged by what had evolved and clear about the particular need to find new ways to connect congregations and church leaders within our huge geography, diversity of people and ministries. With this in mind, rather than sharing my current thoughts on theological or social issues (that is, writing something like a blog entry), I want instead to share a mix of "snapshots" of experiences gathered over the past month as I have traveled among you and witnessed a fascinating mix of valued tradition and exciting new models of ministry:

BLOGS - If you want to read some interesting blogs, here are a few I've recently discovered among some of our pastors: Michael Pater (at central-ucc.org); Jeremy Rutledge ([his blog is here](#), the church website is circularchurch.org); Kimberleigh Buchanan (at pilgrimageucc.org); and David Brown (at pilgrim-church.com). As you check these local church websites be sure to look at the numerous other examples of exciting new ministries being carried out by just these four congregations (and we have many more!). And when you are on the Circular website, be sure to look at deep history (dating back to 1681) mixed with the new (their new green building). After wandering through the historic graveyard at Circular Karen and I met with Jeremy and talked about ministry in SECUCC. We talked about the problems of distance and isolation -how are pastors able to be connected. I suggested to Jeremy that he check out Michael Pater's blog – it seemed very similar in form and content to his own, and perhaps they could find ways to link. To my surprise Jeremy said: "I know Michael, we did CPE together! Yes, I need to get in touch with him now that I'm settled in here."

ANOTHER LINK

- We have two new congregations that are experimenting with being linked across some miles: Praxis in Atlanta and Praxis in Americus. Not only do they share names, but as you may recall one of the pastors in Atlanta (Leah Lyman-Waldron) was ordained at the same time as the pastor in Americus (Kirk Lyman-Barner) at Central UCC in Atlanta. Same names for two congregations ... and even similar names for two pastors – although they're not related by blood. Both congregations are working together on web presence, and both have a deep passion for mission. And in the case of Kirk Lyman-Barner, his "day job" is linked with another rich ministry as he serves as the Director of U.S. Field Operations for the Fuller Center (fullercenter.org). I've now worshiped with each of these congregations, and in each the smaller group (gathered in the Central UCC parlor and in Kirk's home) reflected the spirit and vitality of the early Church. Being

in Americus evokes other histories as well: Clarence Jordan and Koinonia; Millard Fuller and Habitat for Humanity as well as the Fuller Center; and Jimmy Carter!

ADDITIONAL RICH HISTORY

- after the Knoxville Association meeting (where I also experienced a sense of exciting, welcoming ministry occurring in Church of the Savior), Karen and I traveled on to visit Uplands Retirement Community and Pleasant Hill UCC. There we met a number of friends from past ministries across the UCC; we saw the positive changes taking place at Uplands (e.g., expansion of assisted living and memory care facilities);

and we got to experience a unique blend of history with the new. If you check out the new church website (pleasanthilluccn.org) you can meet their new interim pastor (Nayiri Karjian); read about the deep history of Uplands ("Mission Without Boundaries" written by a resident UCC pastor, Ted Braun – among the interesting facts is that ca. 35 residents of Uplands have served in ministries in other countries!); and see their green building renovation.

AND A HISTORY UNIQUE TO THE SOUTH

- As you know, SECUCC has a rich history of ministries and congregations founded by the AMA following the Civil War. I touched on this fact last month when I talked about visiting First Congregational UCC in Atlanta, and since then I've been able to visit our congregations in Thomasville and Savannah. In each place one feels the cloud of witnesses who were leaders in the Civil Rights movement over the years, and at the same time one sees the movement into the future. For example, at First Congregational UCC the pastor, Dwight Andrews, not only leads a vibrant congregation but he also carries its presence out into the world as he shares his gifts in music with the recent Atlanta Music Festival and the upcoming Jazz for the Journey symposium in Cleveland. And after a recent visit to Thomasville to meet their new pastor, James Banks, and



Rev. Kirk Lyman-Barner preparing for worship at Praxis UCC in Americus

two lay leaders, I am planning a return there on October 27 to install James as their new pastor – an installation that won't be the usual UCC installation since James comes out of the AME and is not yet authorized with us. James is also a musician and previously served as the church organist for Bethany UCC in Thomasville!

FINALLY, SOME OTHER EXAMPLES OF MOVING INTO THE FUTURE -

The Center for Progressive Renewal was born here in the SECUCC, and their two co-executive Directors (Cameron Trimble and Michael Piazza) are now doing exciting things on line (including daily blogs they call “[Liberating Word](#)”) as they help us create a new Church for the future ... and as they work on living out their ideas as co-pastors at our Virginia Highlands congregation. Our own Pathways learning program is doing a similar thing with its focus on lay education. And Decatur UCC is now streaming live its worship service (check this out at Livestream.com/decaturucc for a sample of Glenna Shepherd with her colleagues and warm congregation in worship.)

Well, those are my snapshots for now. I know that there are many more to visit and experience in the coming days, and I celebrate the many ways that God is Still Speaking in our midst!

– Shalom, Randy

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About Randy Hyvonen

After 18 years of conference ministry in Ohio, Pacific NW, and Montana-North Wyoming, Randy retired in 2011. Recently he's was lured back into service by the opportunity to help the Southeast Conference “bridge the gap” as it looks for a new Designated

Conference Minister.

[View all posts by Randy Hyvonen →](#)

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"Love Has No Borders" book features SEC ministers justice work on immigration

Rev. Angie Wright, pastor of Beloved Community UCC in Birmingham is the editor for "Love Has No Borders", a recently released book detailing the faith-based struggle against the HB56 immigration law in Alabama. She writes:

“ On April 27, 2011, sixty-two killer tornadoes ripped through Alabama, destroying homes, lives, and entire communities. Two weeks later, another disaster struck Alabama — HB56, the most draconian anti-immigrant law passed by any state in the nation. Instead of working to provide disaster relief for a stricken people, Alabama legislators fulfilled campaign promises to criminalize illegal immigrants for simply setting foot in Alabama. The intent of the law was to make every aspect of their lives so miserable that they would self-deport.



“ Love Has No Borders is the witness of faith leaders in Alabama: when we stood up, spoke out, marched with our immigrant neighbors, and defied man-made barriers that

divided God's people, real change took place. People of faith in Alabama drew a new line in the sand, guided by their unshakeable belief that Love Has No Borders.



An excellent sermon from Rev. Ellen Sims, pastor of Open Table UCC in Mobile is also featured in the book. You can order the book from Greater Birmingham Ministries at www.gbm.org. You can download a flyer for the book [by clicking here](#).

Also, this would be an interesting resource to discuss with a group. You can get a 10% discount for orders of 10 or more books.

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Mission 4:1 Earth brought environmental care and UCC unity according to study



Mission 4:1 Earth had the stated goal of “one united church on a shared resurrection witness for Planet Earth during 50 great days of greening up, powering down, and shouting out for the environment!” A study reflecting on the impact of Mission 4:1 Earth just released by the national office of the UCC demonstrates the success of these goals. It concludes:

“For individuals, a sense of connection with others across the UCC was the most important characteristic; and for congregations/groups, a sense of connection for people within those groups was deepened. Also for congregations/groups, a deeper

commitment to earth care/environmental issues was noteworthy. Most respondents reflected on having a sense of connection to the wider church while being a part of something greater than self. Several people expressed that the effort was well received and that they committed to on-going earth care as a result.

You can read the entirety of the study [here](#).

Have any stories about the lasting impact of Mission 4:1 Earth in your congregation? We'd love to hear from you!

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UCC Minister Robert Naylor to be featured on Day 1 radio program



Rev. Robert Naylor

The Rev. Robert H. Naylor, a church consultant, author, and retired United Church of Christ minister, will be the featured speaker Nov. 10 on “Day 1” with host Peter Wallace, a nationally syndicated ecumenical radio program produced by The Alliance for Christian Media based in Atlanta.

Naylor, now based in South Carolina and Massachusetts, is the lead consultant for In Church Imagining, a clergy coaching and local church planning resource. He is also the author of a new book on church leadership, *“What Church Leaders Really Need to Know! A Practical How-To Guide,”* published by Pilgrim Press.

For 10 years until his retirement in 2011, Naylor was senior minister of Second Congregational United Church of Christ in Greenwich, Conn. Earlier he served other UCC churches in

Connecticut, and was also part of the national church staff in the Office of Church Life and Leadership.

Naylor is a graduate of Ursinus College in Collegeville, Penn., and earned his M.Div. from Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Penn.

His “Day 1” sermon for the 25th Sunday after Pentecost, based on Luke 20:27-38, is entitled “Jesus Says Everything Is Small Stuff, Except...”

The program includes opening and closing interviews with Naylor conducted by Wallace, who is also executive producer.

“Day 1” has been broadcast every week for more than 68 years, formerly as “The Protestant Hour.” Featuring outstanding preachers from the mainline denominations, “Day 1” is currently distributed to more than 200 radio stations across America and overseas.



Peter Wallace

More information and audio broadcast of the program can be found at Day1.org.

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Three ONA UCC churches featured on PBS this weekend!



Bonnie Erbe

Three ONA congregations—Church of the Red Rocks in Sedona, AZ, Community UCC in St. Paul Park, MN, and Covenant Baptist UCC in Washington, DC—are featured on the PBS documentary program, “To the Contrary” with Bonnie Erbe. This episode is entitled, “The Welcoming Movement”. In many markets, the show will air tomorrow (Saturday October 12). Dates and times will vary, so you should check your local PBS station. In Atlanta it will air on Georgia Public TV at 7am and 5pm.

Let others know about this public voice for the UCC! If you miss the program, you can

watch the video later at www.pbs.org/to-the-contrary.

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Praxis UCC in Americus – Ministering through Homeschool Cooperative

by Cori Lyman-Barner

The Koinonia Home School Cooperative began at historic Koinonia five years ago when three Koinonia Farm Community interns gave leadership to a small group of home schooled students whose families lived and worked at Koinonia and a few who lived locally in Americus and Sumter County. The Cooperative thrived and grew at Koinonia,



with the children becoming an important part of the life of this intentional community, participating

in daily meals, learning hands-on in the orchards, vineyards, gardens and bakery, and learning from community members with many stories and diverse experiences.

Koinonia passed the torch of sponsorship to Praxis Americus UCC this summer and the Cooperative moved from the Farm into the small town of Americus. Habitat for Humanity International provides a low-rent building for the group that meets and exceeds the nee

ds of the children. This generosity has allowed the cooperative to continue even through changes in structure and operation.

The majority of the parents in the cooperative work for Habitat, Koinonia, or similar ministries. They are united by the belief that working for the good of others is a worthwhile calling, one worthy of teaching to our

Parents and Praxis members lead activities, teach classes, and mentor students, while simultaneously providing a diverse, top-quality, child-centered learning environment. Four students have graduated from the cooperative and are now full-time students at Georgia Southwestern University, Armstrong Atlantic State University, and Emory University.children. By sponsoring this home school cooperative, Praxis is able to support these families who live on modest incomes, working to lift people out of poverty here in Sumter County and around the world.



At Praxis UCC – Americus, we are delighted to serve our members and the larger community of ministers in this valuable and unique way. The home school cooperative ministry is something that fits well with our congregation and the UCC's historical support of educational programs. We don't have a lot of

money to give to the program, but the time and talent we offer helps to make the program a rich experience for the students and empowers their families to continue to be part of important ministries in our community.



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